Introduction

TNF inhibitors have been associated to the occurrence of reactivation of latent tuberculosis (TB), particularly monoclonal antibodies. Due to the higher prevalence of TB in Portugal, the Portuguese Society of Rheumatology developed guidelines for the screening and treatment of latent TB in patients treated with biologics. Electronic medical charts that automatically download data into a registry can provide a structured approach to the medical practice and improve the surveillance of adverse effects.

Aim

To present the results of TB screening of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients treated with anti-TNF agents using an electronic database registry developed by the Portuguese Society of Rheumatology - BioRePortAR.

Results

Population characteristics: 82 patients, 85.4% female, mean age 57.6±13 years, followed up during 298.7 patient-years.

- Thirty-two (39%) patients were treated for latent TB
- Nine (28%) of the patients treated for latent TB were TST negative (Of these, 4 were treated due to chest radiograph findings, 3 due to epidemiological factors and 2 became TST positive after a second test)
- No severe adverse effects related to isoniazide were reported
- There were no cases of TB reactivation
- A Mycobacterium avium infection was reported in a patient with longstanding RA treated with infliximab.

Discussion

Thirty nine percent of patients were treated for latent TB before starting TNF inhibitors and a third of them were TST negative. Neither isoniazid severe adverse events nor TB reactivation cases were reported.

BioRePortAR is a useful tool for the quality assessment of medical practice.

Patients and Methods

RA patients treated with TNF inhibitors in our centre were followed up and the data was introduced in BioRePortAR. TB screening was performed at baseline and consisted of clinical history, chest radiograph and tuberculin skin test (TST).

All severe adverse events related with latent TB therapy were reported, as well as eventual cases of active TB. Patients included started anti-TNF therapy no later than March 2010 and were followed up for at least 9 months.

References